



**Senator Charles S. Poochigian, Republican Caucus Chairman**  
Representing Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tuolumne Counties

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Attorney General Supports Poochigian's Request for Review of First 5 Commission's Use of Taxpayer Funds**

*Citing Conflict, Lockyer Refers Investigation to Sacramento County District Attorney*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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SACRAMENTO – In a letter Attorney General Bill Lockyer stated his support for Senator Chuck Poochigian's (R-Fresno) request for an investigation into whether taxpayer funds were illegally used by the First 5 Commission for campaign advertising, and called for a prompt review. Citing a pre-existing attorney-client relationship with the First 5 Commission, and a potential conflict of interest, the Attorney General referred the request for a civil and criminal investigation to Sacramento County District Attorney Jan Scully's office, which has concurrent enforcement authority.

Poochigian is specifically seeking an investigation into whether the First 5 Commission illegally used taxpayer funds to gather signatures and influence voters to support Proposition 82, the "Preschool for All" campaign. Following is a statement from Senator Poochigian:

"Attorney General Bill Lockyer has acknowledged that allegations that the First 5 Commission may have misused taxpayer funds in connection with campaign advertising for Proposition 82 warrant a prompt review. Although the Attorney General's office has investigated and prosecuted other state entities and officers in the past, he has decided to refer this case. I believe that Sacramento County District Attorney Jan Scully will fully investigate the matter and, if warranted, prosecute any civil or criminal charges.

"If it is found that a state appointee unlawfully used public resources for campaign activity, he or she could be held personally liable. If the First 5 Commission's actions were found to be unlawful, those directing funds could be liable for civil penalties in excess of \$69 million dollars for the 'Preschool for All' television ad campaign, as well as potential criminal penalties. However, the potential cost to our election process and damage to the public trust would be far greater. Given the short timeframe, I hope that this investigation and the decision whether or not to seek damages or injunctive relief, if appropriate, will be expedited so that the public is afforded the greatest protection."

The district attorney's investigation into misuse of taxpayer funds by the First 5 Commission is part of an ongoing effort to determine whether public resources were used to influence the campaign for Proposition 82. Senator Poochigian is Vice-Chair of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which will be reviewing calls for an audit of the matter on Wednesday, March 8.

- [View Attorney General Bill Lockyer's Response to Senator Poochigian, and the Request for Referral to the Sacramento County District Attorney \(PDF\).](#)
- [View Poochigian's Request for an Attorney General Investigation.](#)

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